

July 4 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

Naval Air Warfare Center; Craig Koppie, biologist, and Jamie Clark, Assistant Director for Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.

## Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration in Youngstown, Ohio July 4, 1996

Thank you. What a beautiful day. I am so glad to see this great crowd here. I want to thank Clare Maluso—excuse me, I’m having a little trouble with my voice, but I hope you can hear me back there. I want to thank Clare Maluso for doing such a fine job with this event. I want to thank Mayor Ungaro and the other members of the city council who are here. I want to thank Congressman Traficant for what he said and for the work he does for you in Washington every day. I want to thank the other officials who are here, the members of the county commission, especially David Engler, who’s pled your case to me on so many occasions.

I want to thank this wonderful choir for getting us off to a good start. Weren’t they great? *[Applause]* Thank you.

Reverend Powell, you are the best looking 94-year-old woman in the world. I was told before we came out here that her husband was a steelworker so long ago that he started working at 15 cents an hour. So she’s seen a lot of things happen in this community. And hearing her optimism and her hope for the future should be encouraging to all of us.

I wish that Hillary were here with me today, but she’s representing our country—*[applause]*—thank you. She is representing our country in visiting on our day of freedom a lot of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe that used to be dominated by communism that themselves are now free. And they invited her to come for this week, and I think it’s a good thing to be doing.

Somebody joked with me—I don’t know if any of you have seen this new movie “Independence Day”—but somebody said I was coming to Youngstown because this is the day the White House got blown away by space aliens. *[Laughter]* I hope it’s there when I get back. *[Laughter]* Anyway, I recommend the movie. I got a chance to see it the other night.

The last time I came here—the Congressman referred to it—it was in 1992, and I almost

broke up a wedding party. Our bus caravan literally ran into the wedding of Judy and Mario Riccardi. And I was so impressed by them, and I thought she was such a beautiful bride and he was such a lucky fellow, that I invited them to get up on stage at our rally. And they did. And I was just trying to sort of help the marriage get off to a good start. That was 4 years ago, and since then they’ve had one child, and another one’s on the way. So I hope that our campaign made some contribution to it. I understand they’re here. Would they stand up. You all stand up. Give them a hand. *[Applause]* Thank you. Bless you.

I also had an opportunity to see a lot of folks from Youngstown last year when you brought your national championship football team down, and I enjoyed that. And they’ll be back.

I wish I could stay all day and stay through the evening and see the fireworks display that I know Bruce Zoldan’s going to do. But I just want to thank you for giving me a chance to be a small part of your bicentennial.

This is a day where all Americans put aside their business and their political preconceptions and just celebrate the freedom of our country, a day for family and friends, for softball and barbecue and music, a day to remember that even though we sometimes take the blessings of liberty for granted, millions of people around the world would give anything to share them. So I wanted to share with you my feelings about some joyous news a long way around the world.

Yesterday the Russian people went back to the polls in a free and fair election. They had an election; then they had a runoff. And it was the second election. That is, they had once elected a President, and now we were going to see if democracy would take in a country that was so long dominated by Communists, and before that by the czars. With a decisive voice, the Russian people chose democracy.

Yesterday, even in the runoff election, almost two-thirds of them showed up to vote, to say, "We want to control our destiny." They deserve enormous credit for the remarkable progress they have made toward democracy and toward a free economy. And yesterday they said, "We want to keep on moving forward. We choose freedom. We choose democracy. We choose hope. We choose the future."

Over our own 220-year history, we know it's not easy to preserve democracy, to meet its own challenges, to keep pursuing life, liberty, and happiness as our Founders intended us to do. Well, we've all got a stake in what happens in other countries that we used to be so far apart from. And I hope that all of you today, in just a good old-fashioned American gesture, would join me here in the heartland of America in congratulating President Yeltsin and the people of Russia for their commitment to the freedom that we love.

Two centuries ago at another time of great challenge and change, a group of Revolutionary War veterans were given this piece of land in an unchartered wilderness. They were told to go take the land, cut the path to the West and to the American future, take responsibility to seize the opportunities offered by our young democracy. They were pathfinders into a new land, trailblazers for our new Nation. Their work helped to build us into the greatest, strongest, most prosperous nation in the world.

Throughout your history, Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley have been at the heart of this Nation and its life. When our great steel mills and factories built the world's greatest industrial power, Youngstown led the way. When the forces of democracy joined to defeat fascism and then to defeat communism, Youngstown led the way.

Your hard work and your enduring values have been a shining example to all America. Now those same virtues and values will bring this region back and carry America into the 21st century still the world's strongest force for prosperity and peace and freedom, still a place where the American dream is alive for every single American who is willing to work to achieve it.

Two hundred years ago, the people of Youngstown were pioneers. You were then pioneers as you built the world's greatest industrial machine, and now again you are pioneers as

you make the great transition into a new economy and a new century.

For many years, as the steel industry was battered by a changing economy, this city was hit hard. But instead of sinking into defeatism, you stepped into the future, manufacturing specialty steel and aluminum and liquid crystals for computer displays. You are becoming a trade and a storage hub for the world. Youngstown is ready to take off, to move into the 21st century more vital and prosperous than ever.

I know you've united in an effort to build a world-class air cargo facility at the Youngstown Warren Regional Airport. We will continue to be a strong partner in that effort. Last April we announced Federal assistance to help Youngstown plan for this facility and to move forward. Now our administration has recommended \$47 million in Federal funds to help to develop the airport. And I know with the Congressman's help and work we can work together and get it done.

The challenges you have faced here are really challenges all Americans are facing, and we have to meet them as you are working to meet them, as one community, one America reaching out across the lines that divide us, pressing forward and never looking back.

For decades, Youngstown milled the steel that built the bridges that spanned our great rivers and linked our great cities. Now your values must build the bridges to carry us all into a new century. On this Independence Day let us resolve to keep our families strong and our children healthy.

We are all saddened by the deaths yesterday of eight people from the fireworks in southern Ohio. Let us pray for their families. And let us resolve to pull all the closer to our own families.

Let us resolve to make sure that all of our people have a chance to be winners in this new economy. I am very grateful that in the last 3½ years America has cut its enormous deficit by more than half and generated 9.7 million new jobs. But I know there are still Americans who want to work and who could be good workers who don't have jobs. I'm very grateful that after 10 long years the average wages in our country are beginning to rise again. But I know there are too many people who are working harder and harder without getting those raises. So let us resolve to increase incomes and grow together, not drift apart.

I am grateful that we are entering the 4th year in a row when the crime rate is coming down in America; that we are putting 100,000 police on the street; that we are protecting our people from the real problems that we can protect them from with initiatives like the Brady bill that has kept 60,000 fugitives, felons, and stalkers from buying guns when they should not have been able to do it.

But we must resolve to keep working at this until we take our streets back from crime and gangs and drugs. We can never say we have dealt with the crime problem adequately until you can go home at night and turn on the evening news and be genuinely surprised instead of numbed if the lead story is a crime story. That's when we'll know we have restored America to where it ought to be.

Let us resolve to give our children the world's best education. I am glad for the progress that has been made in that, but I won't be satisfied until we have done more. By the year 2000, every schoolroom and library in this entire country should be connected to the Internet so that every child has access to the virtues of the computer age.

And I want every single person in America who needs it to be able to go on to college. I want the college tuition of every family to be deductible up to \$10,000 a year. And I want us to reach the point in America where 2 years of education after high school are just as universal as those first 12 years. We need that guarantee. And that's why I've proposed a tax credit for 2 years of community college for every American of any age to go back and get the education and training they need to make the most their own lives. It is important.

I am grateful for the progress we have made in relieving tensions with Russia and reducing the nuclear threat and helping to make peace in places like Bosnia, the Middle East, Northern Ireland, and Haiti. But as we mourn the 19 brave young men who gave their lives for our freedom and security in Saudi Arabia, let us resolve to keep working to be a beacon of freedom in the rest of the world and here at home.

We know that terrorism can strike anywhere, whether it's in the World Trade Center or Oklahoma City or Tokyo or London or the Holy Land. And we know it can strike from sources within and without. But we know almost always it is fueled by religious or ethnic or racial hatreds that make people look down on other

human beings as less worthy than themselves. That is not the American way. And let us resolve to continue to fight it.

This week, I declared officially that this month, July, would be a month of national unity, calling on Americans of all faiths, from all walks of life, to join together to combat and speak against the rash of burnings of African-American churches and other houses of worship in this country. Let's say on this July 4th, this is our America, here. That is not our America. We want this America for all Americans.

Opportunity and responsibility, faith and family, freedom and community, respect for law, and respect for one another: these are the bridges across which we must walk to the 21st century. These are the bridges you are building here now in 1996, in the 200th year of Youngstown's existence. Our values and our visions are as sturdy as tempered steel. If we remember what it means to be Americans, how blessed our great Nation has been, how great we are, and how great we can be when we come together to meet our challenges and protect our values, then the best days of America are still ahead.

I ask you just to think of this as you wave your flags on the Fourth of July. What did those people mean in 1776 when they said, "We hold these truths to be self-evident"? What does it mean to believe that we're all equal, that we all have a right but not a guarantee to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? What does it mean to say everybody should have an equal opportunity, but everyone should provide equal responsibility? What does it mean to say that we are greater together than we can ever be on our own? These are the things you must ask.

And think about this: With all the changes you've been through and all the troubles you've seen, this is still the greatest country in the world. And what we have to ask ourselves is, what do we want America to look like when our children grow up to be our age, or our grandchildren? What do we want it to mean to them when they pledge allegiance to the flag and say they are still pledged to the Republic for which our flag stands, one Nation—one Nation—under God, with liberty and justice for all. Think about that. The answer will be clear.

Thank you. Good luck. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:24 p.m. at Riverfront Park at the ceremony celebrating the 200th anniversary of Youngstown and the 150th anniversary of Mahoning County, OH. In his remarks, he referred to Clare Maluso, director, Federal

Plaza; Mayor Patrick J. Ungaro of Youngstown; David Engler, Mahoning County commissioner; Rev. Elizabeth Powell, pastor, World Fellowship Interdenominational Church; and Bruce Zoldan, president, B.J. Alan Fireworks Co.

## Statement on the Russian Presidential Election

*July 4, 1996*

On behalf of the American people, I extend warm congratulations to President Yeltsin and to all the citizens of Russia on the successful completion of this vigorously contested Presidential election. Yesterday's historic vote underscores how far Russia's democratic development has progressed in just a few years. While the official results have not yet been announced, it is clear that President Yeltsin and reform have won a decisive victory.

The credit for Russia's remarkable achievements over the last 5 years in developing the institutions of democracy and a market economy goes to the citizens of Russia and to their leaders, in particular President Yeltsin. The Russian

people, through their participation in the electoral process, have pronounced themselves firmly in favor of the politics and economics of choice.

From the outset of my administration, the United States has been steadfast in its support of political and economic reform in Russia. We renew that commitment today as the Russian people move to consolidate these gains and complete Russia's integration with the global community. Few could have imagined the profound changes in Russia that we have seen since 1991. The changes are testimony not only to the progress that has been achieved, but to what the future can bring.

## Remarks on the Unemployment Rate and an Exchange With Reporters

*July 5, 1996*

*The President.* Good morning. Today, we had good economic news for America's working families. Four years ago today, unemployment was nearly 8 percent; job growth was anemic; the deficit was at an all-time dollar high; wages were stagnant. We promised to take these economic challenges head-on. Our critics said it wouldn't work. But today's news, once again, proves them wrong.

Unemployment has dropped to 5.3 percent. The American economy has created 10 million jobs since the beginning of this administration. The deficit has been cut more than half, and wages for American workers are finally on the rise again. We have the most solid American economy in a generation. And it's good news when America can have high job growth, strong investment, and low inflation.

In 1993 we put in place a comprehensive strategy: cutting the deficit, expanding trade, rewarding work, investing in the skills and the education of our people. We have a lot more to do. We must make sure that every American has the tools that he or she needs to make the most of the opportunities in this new economy. We have to make sure that income growth continues. That's why we should balance the budget, pass the Kassebaum-Kennedy health reform bill, raise the minimum wage, improve pension security, and improve access to college and training for all Americans. Our strategy is working, and this is no time to turn back.

On this Independence Day weekend, we Americans have a lot to celebrate. Just yesterday, the Russian people also showed the power of democratic ideals and free markets by turning out in large numbers to vote for the forces of